

## Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO ALL AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC POSTS PRIORITY

USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY

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INFORM CONSULS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: APER, TZ (CARTER, W. BEVERLY, JR.)

SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S COMMENTS ON CARTER INCIDENT (PRESS  
CONFERENCE TRANSCRIPT)

GENEVA PASS TO AMBASSADOR CARTER

1. SECRETARY KISSINGER, AT A PRESS CONFERENCE AUGUST 17  
IN VAIL, COLORADO, WAS ASKED TO COMMENT ON PRESS REPORTS  
THAT U.S. AMBASSADOR TO TANZANIA, W. BEVERLY CARTER, JR.,  
HAD BEEN PENALIZED FOR HIS HANDLING OF KIDNAPPING CASE  
INVOLVING THREE AMERICAN STUDENTS AND A DUTCH WOMAN.

2. FOLLOWING IS TRANSCRIPT OF RELEVANT PORTION OF SEC-  
RETARY'S PRESS CONFERENCE:

Q. MR. SECRETARY, IF I MAY CHANGE THE SUBJECT, COULD YOU  
EXPLAIN TO ME THE SITUATION SURROUNDING THE TRANSFER OF  
AMBASSADOR CARTER OUT OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT?

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SECRETARY KISSINGER: TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND

I AM NOT ALWAYS TOLD EVERYTHING IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT  
AMBASSADOR CARTER HAS NOT BEEN TRANSFERRED OUT OF THE  
STATE DEPARTMENT. WE HAVE AVOIDED ANY COMMENT ON A  
SITUATION WHICH, QUITE FRANKLY, HAS NOT ALWAYS BEEN  
REPORTED WITH FULL ACCURACY.

THE PROBLEM THAT ARISES IN THE CASE OF TERRORIST  
ATTACKS ON AMERICANS HAS TO BE SEEN NOT ONLY IN RELATION  
TO THE INDIVIDUAL CASE BUT IN RELATION TO THE THOUSANDS  
OF AMERICANS WHO ARE IN JEOPARDY ALL OVER THE WORLD.  
IN EVERY INDIVIDUAL CASE, THE OVERWHELMING TEMPTATION IS  
TO GO ALONG WITH WHAT IS BEING ASKED.

ON THE OTHER HAND, IF TERRORIST GROUPS GET THE  
IMPRESSION THAT THEY CAN FORCE A NEGOTIATION WITH THE  
UNITED STATES AND AN ACQUIESCENCE IN THEIR DEMANDS, THEN  
WE MAY SAVE LIVES IN ONE PLACE AT THE RISK OF HUNDREDS  
OF LIVES EVERYWHERE ELSE.

THEREFORE, IT IS OUR POLICY -- IN ORDER TO SAVE  
LIVES AND IN ORDER TO AVOID UNDUE PRESSURE ON AMBASSADORS  
ALL OVER THE WORLD, IT IS OUR POLICY -- THAT AMERICAN  
AMBASSADORS AND AMERICAN OFFICIALS NOT PARTICIPATE IN  
NEGOTIATIONS ON THE RELEASE OF VICTIMS OF TERRORISTS, AND  
THAT TERRORISTS KNOW THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL NOT  
PARTICIPATE IN THE PAYMENT OF RANSOM AND IN THE NEGOTIA-  
TION FOR IT.

IN ANY INDIVIDUAL CASE, THIS REQUIRES HEARTBREAKING  
DECISIONS.

IT IS OUR VIEW THAT IT SAVES MORE LIVES AND MORE  
JEOPARDY AND THAT IT WILL HELP AMBASSADORS, WHO CAN THEN  
HIDE BEHIND FIRM RULES RATHER THAN LEAVE IT TO THE  
INDIVIDUAL DECISION.

I THINK AMBASSADOR CARTER IS A DISTINGUISHED FOREIGN  
SERVICE -- HE IS NOT A FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER. HE IS A  
DISTINGUISHED AMBASSADOR, AND HE HAS SERVED WELL IN  
TANZANIA. I DO NOT WANT TO ENGAGE IN A DEBATE IN WHICH  
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HIS CONCERNS ARE VERY EASILY UNDERSTANDABLE AND WHICH  
WE ARE TRYING TO HANDLE IN AS COMPASSIONATE A MANNER AS WE  
CAN, AND WITHOUT PENALIZING ANY INDIVIDUAL CONCERNED.  
BUT, THERE ARE IMPORTANT ISSUES OF PRINCIPLE INVOLVED HERE.

Q. WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN TO AMBASSADOR CARTER? HE HAS  
THE IMPRESSION HE HAS BEEN TRANSFERRED OUT OF THE STATE  
DEPARTMENT.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I THINK THAT AMBASSADOR CARTER WOULD BE BETTER ADVISED TO DEAL WITH THE RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT THAN TO ENGAGE IN AN INDEPENDENT PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN OF HIS OWN.

WE ARE RELUCTANT TO PUT FORWARD OUR VIEW OF THE

SITUATION BECAUSE WE DO NOT BELIEVE IT WOULD HELP ANYBODY. WE ARE TRYING TO MAINTAIN A PRINCIPLE THAT TERRORISTS CANNOT NEGOTIATE WITH AMERICAN OFFICIALS, AND WE ARE DOING THIS IN ORDER TO PROTECT THE THOUSANDS OF AMERICANS THAT COULD BECOME VICTIMS ALL OVER THE WORLD IF WE ONCE STARTED THAT PROCESS, AND NOT ONLY THE AMERICAN TOURISTS AND STUDENTS, BUT ALSO AMERICAN OFFICIALS.

Q. MR. SECRETARY, ONE MORE QUESTION ON THIS. I UNDERSTAND THAT PRESIDENT FORD WROTE A LETTER TO PRESIDENT NYERERE OF TANZANIA THANKING HIM FOR HIS COOPERATION IN THIS PROBLEM?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: THAT IS RIGHT.

Q. AND THAT THAT COOPERATION INCLUDED RELEASING TWO OF THE TERRORISTS OF THE ORGANIZATION THAT KIDNAPPED THE FOUR YOUNG STUDENTS. NOW, ISN'T THAT COOPERATING WITH TERRORISTS?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: AFTER THE EVENT, PRESIDENT FORD DID INDEED WRITE THIS LETTER, AND IN EACH INDIVIDUAL CASE IT IS A MATTER OF JUDGMENT OF HOW RIGIDLY THAT LINE IS DRAWN AND AT WHAT POINT ONE BELIEVES THAT THE LINE HAS BEEN BREACHED.

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IN ANY EVENT, AMBASSADOR CARTER HAS NOT BEEN TRANSFERRED OUT OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT.

Q. BUT OUT OF HIS POST?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I REALLY AM TRYING TO AVOID A DETAILED DISCUSSION OF THE ISSUE, I THINK IN THE INTEREST OF ALL PARTIES CONCERNED.

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